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Date: December 4, 2012

To: Representative Foster, Chairperson, House Natural Resources Committee
House Natural Resources Committee

From: Rebecca Park, Governmental Affairs

Re: Testimony on SB 1350

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment in support of SB 1350. I appreciate Senator Casperson sponsoring the bill before you today which would allow but not require the Natural Resources commission to authorize a hunt season.

Michigan Farm Bureau supports allowing the NRC to establish a hunting season for wolves. Many livestock producers in the Upper Peninsula have experienced depredation caused by wolves in the area. There is a current law in place that permits a livestock owner to kill a wolf but that legislation requires the farmer wait until the wolf is "in the act of preying upon" the livestock. It is an important tool that farmers need but it is only effective when they are present as the depredation event begins.

With approximately 700 wolves in Michigan, the population will grow and more human/wolf and livestock/wolf interactions are likely to occur. The ability for the NRC to establish a hunting season is appropriate to manage this predatory specie. You may hear about federal grants to allow farmers to purchase donkeys or guard dogs but it is unlikely you will hear how a farmer is then required to keep the animal for a period of time, even if the animal does not provide additional protection, or how the farmer is required to provide the food and veterinarian care with no reimbursement. Farmers want to farm, not be held responsible for the wolf or other wildlife populations. To expect a farmer to be around their livestock 24/7 is simply unrealistic.

Farm Bureau policy states "We believe hunting and trapping should be protected as the primary tools for wildlife management."

Again, thank you for your time and considering this important piece of legislation and Farm Bureau urges support of SB 1350.